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CONTENTS.	PAGE
EDITORIALS	177-182
The Talk of War with Japan — Progress of the Hague Conference — Education for Peace — Is the Hague Conference to be a Farce?	
EDITORIAL NOTES	182-188
American Plan for Court of Arbitration — The Munich Peace Congress — Report of the New York Peace Congress — Miss Eckstein at The Hague — American College Students' Memorial — No War Ships on the Lakes — British National Peace Congress — The Burritt Memorial — Further Church Support — Declined to Wear a Sword — International Arbitration Association — The Power of Agreement — The Smiley Golden Wedding — Henry Pickering — The Carnegie Peace Palace — Montreal Educational Convention.	
BREVITIES	189-190
GENERAL ARTICLES:	
What Can the School Do to Aid the Peace Movement? <i>Hon. Nathan C. Schaeffer</i>	190-192
Educational Efforts for International Peace. <i>Prof. S. T. Dutton</i> , <i>The Physician in the Universal Peace Movement. William Benjamin Snow, M. D.</i>	192-195
The Judiciary and Arbitration. <i>Judge William W. Morrow</i>	195-196
The Purposes of the Hague Conference. <i>Mr. Nelidoff</i>	196-197
The Present Status of the International Arbitration Movement <i>Benjamin F. Truellood</i>	197-198
NEW BOOKS	198-200
International Arbitration and Peace Lecture Bureau	200-201

The Talk of War with Japan.

The talk of war between this country and Japan has been exceptionally absurd and groundless, but it has been full of the seeds of mischief and possible danger. Not a few wars in the past have been talked into existence, on insignificant pretexts, with a much smaller volume of reckless prophecy and conscienceless invention than that to which we have been treated the past month.

We may be profoundly grateful that the conditions of our time are such as to make this creation of a war, by mere irresponsible talk and newspaper invention, much more difficult than it was two or three generations ago. The means of speedy intercommunication have become so numerous and reliable that the groundlessness of a war rumor is easily detected and transmitted, and thus a critical situation avoided. An interview of the London *Telegraph's* correspondent, with a diplomat, so-called, at The Hague was published in all the morning papers, assuring us, on the most reliable authority, it was said, that relations between this country and Japan were strained to the breaking point, that the governments were keeping back from the people the facts, that the great fleet of warships was for this reason going to the Pacific, and so on. Coming from The Hague, where the wisdom and good sense

of the world were supposed to be gathered, this report was enough to frighten the very elect among the peacemakers into believing that war was just ready to burst upon us. Next morning the whole story was categorically denied from Washington, both by our government and by the Japanese ambassador, and that was the end of it. The rumor had been punctured by the cable and the quick action of the authorities made possible thereby. The same has been true of the rumors that the proposed visit of the great fleet of battleships to the Pacific was to overawe Japan and silence the clamoring Jingoos of the island.

But though such rumors can now be quickly killed, they remain nevertheless most mischievous in their after results. The Jingoos both in Japan and in this country will feel that they have made progress, and they will hasten to take advantage of the next favorable moment to further foment strife. The big-navy promoters will be encouraged to manufacture further scares. The Oriental haters in California will feel more sure of their game, and will wreck restaurants and abuse Japanese with more brutality than ever. What the wooden diplomat at The Hague, if there was any such man outside of the correspondent's brain, will do, it is impossible to guess. What he ought to do is to retire at once to the junk-heap of effete diplomacy, or be dismissed from service by his government as totally unfit for any position in the diplomatic field. The worst phase of the after-results of such a manufactured scare will be that a large number of people throughout the country will refuse to believe that where there was so much smoke there was no fire. They will persist in believing that Japan has warlike intentions towards us, and that war must come sooner or later. Their influence, perhaps entirely unintentionally, will thus go toward the creation and fostering of suspicion and distrust between the Japanese and ourselves. Such is the evil fruitage of war-scares.

One of the most imperative international duties of our government and people at the present time is to do their utmost to maintain unimpaired the traditional friendship of this country with Japan. The duty is made all the more binding by reason of the shameful acts of injustice done to the Japanese in California. Both the government and the people of Japan have been quick to see and feel the injustice and to express in a manly way their disapproval of it, as they ought to have done. But in spite of this,

with the exception of a few Jingoos, they continue to believe in us, in our national loyalty to justice and right. They have discriminated finely between the acts of a small section of the country and the general attitude of our people and government towards the Japanese. In this respect they have set a shining example of patience and self-restraint which the so-called Christian nations might profitably follow in their dealings with one another. Rarely has anything nobler been seen in international conduct than the speech and behavior of the Japanese government at home and their officials and visitors in this country during the recent war talk. "There is no Japanese-American situation;" "There are no strained relations;" "It is ridiculous;" "The Japanese are not thinking as you are writing;" "Friction is impossible;" "We want peace," — so have they all said, Ambassador Aoki, General Kuroki, Admiral Yamamoto, Prime Minister Komura, Foreign Minister Hayashi, and the rest. And the course which they have taken is all the more praiseworthy because, as everybody knows, it has not been dictated in the least by fear, but altogether by reason, good sense, and enlightened self-interest.

The course which our government has taken, in promptly denying the false rumors about strained relations and about the purpose of the proposed transfer of the battleships to the Pacific, in reasserting our national friendship for Japan, and in the cordiality of the reception given to the visiting Japanese, has been in every way admirable. We are sure that it has all been done with the sincerest motives, in the interest of right and good understanding. It has so been construed by the Japanese, and thus the unfortunate flurry has been ended. But the government ought, in consistency, as a logical sequence of its course, promptly to assure the Japanese government that under the circumstances the big fleet of battleships will not be sent around to the Pacific at the present time. If Secretary Metcalf and the Naval Board think any long cruise is needed for the purpose of training or to show anybody what a mighty and swift-fighting machine we have, the great vessels might be divided into two squadrons and set to chasing each other up and down the Atlantic coast between Greenland and Patagonia. It would add to the effectiveness of the scene and completely quiet the Japanese mind if the ships now on the Pacific coast were sent round the cape to join the Atlantic squadrons in their manœuvres.

In addition to all this we have, government and people alike, an imperative duty to perform in seeing that there is no repetition of the humiliating injustices which have been done the Japanese in California. If these continue to occur, we cannot expect to retain unimpaired the friendship and respect of the powerful new nation which has just come to a consciousness of itself and is hereafter to play a

great rôle in the life of the Pacific. Whatever difficulties may attend the peculiar situation created by the overlapping of State and national jurisdiction on the Pacific coast may easily be solved if the people as a whole determine that they shall be solved in harmony with justice and American principles. No State or city in the nation can long maintain itself in a course of essential injustice toward foreign residents in the face of the condemnation of the united and well-directed public sentiment of the nation.

Japan and the United States, because of their peculiar situation on opposite shores of the great Pacific, have an opportunity such as has perhaps never before come to any two powers to promote the welfare and peace of the world, if they only live on in relations of intimate friendship and harmony. This they will do. They must do it. It is hardly possible to conceive of their doing otherwise. War between them at this late day would be the very height of absurdity and criminality. Peace has conquered in this instance, through the wisdom and foresight of the responsible statesmen on both sides of the water, in spite of jingoism, in spite of the "yellow" press here and the "red" press there, and the other forces of discord and violence which have gotten in their baneful work. Peace will continue to reign between them, all the more triumphantly because of the signal victory which she has just won.

Progress of the Hague Conference.

It is not possible as we go to press to give any definite idea of what the practical results of the work of the Hague Conference will be. So far none of the committees have made report to a plenary session on any of the subjects which they have been discussing. An immense amount of hard, conscientious work has evidently been done in the committee rooms, behind closed doors, the results of which we shall soon begin to see. Indeed, the official reports made public at the close of each committee meeting have given a fair idea of how the sentiment of the delegations runs. But as the Conference as a whole must pass on all the reports, it is not safe to assume yet that we know how any measure will finally be disposed of.

There has been a good deal of criticism — much of it just, but some of it mere impatient fault-finding — of the slowness with which the important subjects urged upon the Conference have been taken up. It has certainly been depressing to see the distinguished men gathered there compelled to give their main thought for nearly six weeks to questions of the details of war and fighting. But this has been not so much their fault as the fault of the governments which sent them to The Hague with instructions. War is still, however regretfully one may have to say it, a recognized method of dealing with international controversies. So long as this continues to be